

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #360-A,
With Newspaper Editors and Publishers,
In the Main Diningroom of the White House,
April 15, 1937, 8.10 P.M.

(Mr. Keigler, of the Association of Newspaper Editors and Publishers, and Mr. Atwood, Secretary of the Association, introduced the members individually to the President.)

THE PRESIDENT: I am very glad to welcome what has become now, after four years, a group of old friends. I congratulate your secretary and treasurer on having a remarkable memory for names. I think probably they would make very excellent candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency. (Laughter)

You know, this party that we have had now -- what is this, the fifth?

Q The fourth or fifth.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank the Lord it is informal. Thank the Lord it is off the record. It is more difficult for me than the Gridiron Dinner because, at the Gridiron Dinner, I have the last word and nobody can talk back. At this party you can and do talk back. (Laughter)

I am very sorry that the principal talker-back is not here tonight, Bill White. Somebody will have to substitute for him. You know, in the Campaign, I got Bill White into a position that he has never been in before. I was sitting on top of a railroad train, on the back platform, and he was down in the crowd. I had a loud speaker and he did not. So, when we pulled into Emporia, honestly I did not know that Bill was out there. I stood out on

the back platform and after I had been duly introduced by the Democratic Chairman or someone like that, I put up my hand like that (indicating) and looked all around through the crowd and I said, "Where is Bill White?"

Of course the crowd howled with glee. I had them at a disadvantage right off. I said, "Bill is an old friend of mine. He goes back twenty-five years. And the interesting thing is that Bill agrees with me three years and a half out of every four."

(Laughter) I said, "As for the other six months out of the four years --" At that moment I caught sight of Bill. I said, "There you are!" I said, "You come right up here and tell me your story. And," I said to the crowd, "now, as long as he is here, I won't tell you about him during the other six months."

Of course that was extremely unfair political advantage to take over good old William Allen White. I apologized to him afterwards but it did help me to carry Kansas. (Laughter)

I thought tonight, without in any way precluding questions here by you, I would like to ask some questions myself. I thought what we might do -- I have not got any particular statement or message or anything like that to give; I have not got anything on my chest at the present time, and if you people do want to ask questions, I hope you will. I have not prepared anything and, as I say, I do not want to put anything across. But I would like to get some of your slants in the family and off the record on some questions that have been interesting me as they have a whole lot of other people in the country and so I jotted them down on a piece of paper just before supper. I do not know who is going to answer

these and you cannot all answer at once and you have not got a chosen spokesman, I take it, unless the president is directed to speak for you.

The first question is, "Do you think that the influence of newspapers on any public question is as great today as it was twenty years ago?"

Q I will try. Paul ^{Bellamy}~~Bellamy~~, of the class of 1905 of Harvard College.

THE PRESIDENT: I beat you by a year.

Q I used to see you around the campus.

It seems to me it is a matter of timing. To some of us it has seemed that way because we all, I mean you and I, have the same general objective. My father wrote a great book one time, "Looking Backward."

We are all looking toward the same thing, toward a better state of living. It seems to me that you are on the people's side on timing. It is a matter of timing. Well, the human race, we know -- the dumb people, the smart people, democrats and republicans, we know you -- we know you have the courage to carry on and that sort of thing and we love you and are for you.

Mr. President, may I say this: You are the first President I ever knew that dared to quote Aristotle. So help me God, as a Harvard man, it was a great help to me. (Laughter) I loved it and we are going to the same heaven ultimately.

It is a matter of timing. I think the present-day situation for most of the human race is damnable.

I wondered a little bit whether you were pressing a little bit too fast. I would like very much to discuss that question,

if you will (Applause)

THE PRESIDENT: I should say, offhand, that that calls for an "if" statement on my part.

Q Yes: subjunctive.

THE PRESIDENT: All human movements on the liberal side in the past, if you go back through history -- and I am now quoting Woodrow Wilson -- last only about half the length of time that the following conservative movement lasts. In other words, taking it by and large, as Wilson would say, "You have a liberal administration in Government for eight years and then a conservative lasting sixteen years. Therefore, in eight years you have to accomplish all you possibly can.

Q That is fair enough.

THE PRESIDENT: Now, during those eight years, you are constantly combatting the conservative forces and they are trying to take every kind of advantage of you and you have to take every advantage of them. Now, on the other side, you have not quite answered my question yet: Do the public pay as much attention to the press as they did twenty years ago?

Q They don't, I say frankly.

THE PRESIDENT: One reason for that is that there is not enough in my judgment of what might be called flexibility in the press. Too often in their policies they are one jump behind the game. They are writing this or they are taking the same line of policy this month that they took six months ago without realizing that in the six months there has been a perfectly tremendous change in what you and I would call background.

I think what you said and I said, fitted in together, make

a perfectly good answer.

Q They do.

THE PRESIDENT: And now the question is, "Are we moving too fast in general?"

I do not think so because we are not moving really nearly as fast as some people think. If you add up the sum of all the completed changes in national powers -- take, as a simple illustration, in the past four years -- and I say completed changes, accepted changes -- they amount to very little. Each one, as it has come up, seems to have gone pretty far. You take the changes brought about under N. R. A., for instance. For the time being they were very drastic changes, and then they were all knocked out. Now, as a result of the decisions last Monday a very small, infinitesimal part of the N. R. A. change has been restored.

Q That is right.

THE PRESIDENT: Therefore, the actual accepted, accomplished changes in national powers, using that as an example, I think have been far smaller than those people think. The only thing that has been accomplished has been in these particular decisions which, as you know, were to decide the question of collective bargaining in certain specific industries that were before the court. That is all right. One of the columnists this morning tried to lay down a rule for industrialists. He said that A, consulting his lawyer B, was told to accept as a general proposition the rule that if his industry concerns interstate

commerce more than fifty per cent, he would be subject to regulation. If it is less than fifty per cent, he won't. If he is right, it is an even smaller change than I think it is.

Q I see.

THE PRESIDENT: It is not a drop in the bucket. And, so far as going fast goes, I do not think, really, we are going fast at all, because you cannot put your finger on any large, permanent changes in Government that have occurred in the last four years that would amount to a hill of beans so far as constitutionality, policy, et cetera, go. Most of them that are still in existence are liable to be upset by any subsequent administration.

Q (Mr. Jones of the McClatchy papers in California) What you said and what Mr. Bellamy said brings two points to my mind. You asked whether or not newspapers have as much influence. I will say I do not think newspapers have as much influence. because I do not think newspapers have kept up with the times. I think the times are more progressive than editors of newspapers. On the other hand, I will say this: In 1924, Mr. McClatchy, who passed away last year and whom I succeeded, supported La Follette and Wheeler. At that time, as you know, La Follette was supposed to be a Red from Russia and Wheeler was accused of being pro-German. Well, we took all kinds of things. Nevertheless, in the Sacramento Bee that circulates, is published in the county seat, we carried Sacramento County and eight other counties for La Follette as against Coolidge, when he was supposed to be last. Now,

that is 1924. That shows that the people in our area, they were in step with the progressive newspapers. Mr. McClatchy was very liberal minded, always opposed to prohibition, was very liberal, et cetera.

Now, on the proposition, "Have the newspapers as much influence?" I do not think they have. Mr. McClatchy always was for public ownership. In Fresno, where we have a newspaper and have had it since 1922, and it is now the only newspaper there --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): Was that Chester Rowley's old paper?

Q (Mr. Jones) Yes. His paper was established in 1860. We went in in 1922 and within, well, within ten years, the Republic called it quits and sold to us and we are now the only newspaper in Fresno. Mr. McClatchy was a very, very ardent advocate of public ownership. When he went in there, because of the efforts of the paper, the city acquired a municipal garbage collection system and purchased the city water system. Just two months ago we had an election to buy out the private power company and their own testimony showed that they had netted \$400,000. a year and you could buy the power plant for within a few hundred thousand dollars of what they purchased the water plant for, which yields about \$50,000. net a year. It took a two-thirds vote and we carried a hard campaign and we did not even get a one-third vote. They were against it. So that is just a little incident where you think a newspaper, very liberal, would carry it and yet, though they voted overwhelmingly to two propositions that had not nearly the merit, on this we got

only one-third vote. I just give you that for what it is worth.

- Q I think a newspaper had more power in 1936 than it ever had in its history and we have to look at this from two sides. The newspaper of twenty years ago was an entirely different paper from the paper of today. The idea of a newspaper and its publication from the editorial standpoint and the make-up of a newspaper have been changed, as hundreds of other things have been changed in these twenty years. There are a very few partisan newspapers in the United States today, I mean of the old kind, where the newspaper of the days of Horace Greeley and Henry Watterson was built around editorial opinions. The newspaper was a framework for the mental attitude of the editor. After those men, we sank into the machinery of the newspaper itself so that you do not know, nor can anybody in its organization tell who writes the editorials for the newspapers. It is the voice of the paper but, in the printing of the news, I will challenge anybody in the United States to deny that in the printing of the news, including many speeches of the President -- there is no question in my mind -- and with the other side too and in the discussions -- the public was permitted to be the jury.

One reason I say the paper is a greater influence is that there are more newspapers today taken by the public and read for entertainment and news than at any time in the history of the world. At no time has there been registered such an interest by the general public in the questions of policy, of economics, political, socialistic stuff, everything of that kind that

has to do with the Government. They are much more interested than they were in murder stories or in the kind of writing they did twenty years ago when I was editor of a republican paper and it was sacrosanct. But that does not exist today. I think the newspaper today is the voice of the people and the purveyor of information to the public, and that it has more power than it ever did in its history. (Applause)

Q Mr. President, let us not kid you. I do not think it is any good. The newspaper fulfills the ideas of its owner as far as atmosphere is concerned. It will be conservative, middle of the road or liberal as it may appear to be to his interest. This is no reflection on my friend, the previous speaker. I want to know what he thinks of newspapers. But it seems to me that our principal object is to purvey news truly, and our very much longer job is to try to improve public opinion.

In the last campaign -- take Chicago. I know about that because I come from Cleveland. There were papers, except for the (Chicago) Times paper, the tabloid, all of them against you, and Cook County went with a magnificent sweep for you. When they picked up the morning paper they saw a picture of you, just a terrible picture, the lighting was bad and then they had a couple of bums under each shoulder and a couple of other things. Then there were certain cartoons. These people had looked at you, had seen you speaking and made up their minds and when they came the next morning to pick up their favorite morning paper they found a picture of you as the real picture. They knew it was not and I know damned well it was not.

I believe in truth and I believe in bellowing the truth out of the window. I think the main function of the newspaper is to tell the truth. Try to wield the opinions of men in the editorials, if you want, but the main thing is to tell the truth in the news columns.

I said I won't make a long speech and I won't. We are worried about the unionization of newspaper reporters. We really and truly realize that the newspaper business has been good to many of us. It has been good to me; I got out of life all I wanted to and more. I am worried about what will happen to class conscious reporters assigned to report news objectively, whether those reporters who have most passionately supported the labor union movement, if they are sent out to report what happens in a strike, whether they will report it truly or not. I wonder a little whether you, as Chief Magistrate, whom we elected and whom we believe in, I wonder whether you do not have to say, "Stop" to some of those people some time because we cannot have lies in our papers, else we are done. Now, I do not claim we have as much influence in our editorial columns -- the old idea was that an editor was God Almighty for learning -- but we fear greatly, we older men -- because after all, we are old -- we wonder whether this Heywood Broun class conscious crowd coming along will tell the real truth to the people. Can you give us anything to help us about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me tell you a story: I was having tea this afternoon with Morrison, the principal leader of the British Labor Party, a man who, if the British Labor Party came back

into power in four or five years, would probably be the Prime Minister of Great Britain. We have seen the British Empire and Great Britain survive with Ramsay MacDonald as Prime Minister and with a Chancellor of the Exchequer who brought in one of the most brilliant budgets they ever had and was very sound financially.

Morrison was telling what was experienced by our British friends. We are going through the same kind of growing pains with our labor organization that they had there twenty or twenty-five years ago. When any unorganized industry suddenly becomes organized, it has a bad time for the first five or ten or fifteen years. That is true and has been true in the history of all labor movements and it continues until they can develop through a period of years of education, until they have a series of leaders who will be able to see the whole picture instead of just the passionate picture of a new movement.

I think on this question of unionization for reporters, I think you are going to have a bad time, quite frankly, for three or four years, just like the textile industry, which has never been organized in the South, is going to have one hell of a time in the next three or four years in the process of getting organized. They will have bloodshed and everything else. As I was saying to some of the labor people yesterday, the automobile industry, organized for the first time, are a bunch, mentally, of comparatively young men. They have the mental knowledge of boys of fourteen years or fifteen years

insofar as it relates to orderly bargaining through organized labor. In the textile industry you have a bunch of people, especially in the South, who, because of a greater lack of education, quite frankly, than in the automobile plants, have a mental age of eleven or twelve when it comes to organizing a labor movement. You know your reporters better than I do. You can fix their mental age. I think you are going to go through two or three years of a good deal of trouble with the newspaper unions. They will change their leaders very often -- we are reasonably certain of that -- and gradually they will get people who have both feet on the ground all the time instead of people who have one foot off the ground all the time.

Q Right.

THE PRESIDENT: And I think that you, just like any other industry in the United States, have got to face, on the question of organization of labor, very much the same kind of conditions that every other industry has faced in the past and are facing today. They went through it in England a long time ago and now they have pretty stable methods in existence, with pretty well trained labor leaders in all of their unions. They have the vertical union and they have the craft union and, as Morrison said, "We have not completely solved the entente between the vertical and the craft unions in England yet. We have theoretical powers for each, and both types of organizations serve." They will agree to disagree and then the matter is referred to some committee, either of what they call the Federation of Labor or the C. I. O. -- I do not know what they

call it. They cannot agree and the thing is referred to somebody else, and in true British fashion it is dragged along over a period of years and eventually time solves it. We are awfully near to where we are beginning to come to that point of view. That is the best answer I can give.

When it comes down to the question of the policy staff of the paper, the true editorial end of it, I am inclined to think that frank discussion of the subject is going to make it pretty easy for you to have men in your editorial department who would be willing to stick absolutely, literally to the policy of the paper. I think the most radical of the union organizers in the newspaper game will go along with that.

Q You are right.

THE PRESIDENT: You will have exceptions that prove the rule.

Q I do not want to argue with the President of the United States --

I would not want to do that because I always have a tendency to err and he is probably right -- but let us probe that subject a littler further. The printer who can set a certain number of ems of type and a certain number of R's is a printer from Sandy Hook to the Golden Gate. But the reporter is more in the creative artist line. He really is. They cover our city details and our state legislatures and all that sort of thing and he should be, according to our ideas, objective in his presentation. If he gets class conscious too much, are we in danger there?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so because, after all, aren't you getting some kind of an impartial tribunal out of it that will

determine the question that is raised on either side?

Q Not if the present Guild leadership can help it.

Q I might say a word on that because I have experienced running an editorial department that is a closed shop of the American Newspaper Guild. It is the first closed shop. It is a small paper. We affiliated our editorial department with the Newspaper Guild and it is a closed shop; only members are allowed to work. We have had absolutely no trouble with our reporters, with the accuracy or faithfulness or the objectiveness of their reporting.

Q You have had none?

Q None whatsoever.

Q Did you support the New Deal?

Q We did not, editorially, no.

Q Have you had labor disturbances in your city?

Q No, sir; not recently; not the last several years.

Q Suppose you had one, would you have trouble with the Guild reporters?

Q Having had no experience, I cannot answer that.

Q Being from Flint, Michigan, you see I have difficulty standing up.

(Laughter) I have just been through this whole thing. There were a couple of young newspaper men covering the strike there over a period of several weeks, and I saw the thing work and I saw the poorest reporting that I have ever encountered in my experience. Up to that time I had regarded the idea of men being connected with a guild and having that influence in the handling of the news as a sort of academic thing. I saw very decidedly the opposite. We found that during the strike there

was a greater percentage of pro-strike sentiment among the newspaper men covering the strike than there was in the factories themselves. And it entered the reporting of all the press services where it is supposed to be quite -- that point is supposed to be quite sacred. We saw this thing work.

I think the distinction has not been clearly enough drawn between unionization, because that is what the Guild is, in that field and in the ordinary labor field. These men were influenced in various ways. They sought to favor -- they were close to the strike leaders. They bought their way in with the handling of the news, the manner in which they handled the news and there were, right across the country, accounts of that strike and incidents of that strike that were very strange to us living in Flint.

I would like to go back to one point you made earlier about the liberal movement, eight years followed by a conservative movement of sixteen years. If that was not prophetic, I wonder if there would not be any thought of spreading that movement over a period of twelve years?

THE PRESIDENT: Very excellent idea, as long as somebody else does it. You are talking about reporting a strike -- (laughter) not being an experienced newspaper man, although, as you know, I ran a great paper many years ago --

Q (interposing) The Harvard Crimson, yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I had a happy thought and I passed it along to a son-in-law of mine who is running the Seattle Post-Intelligencer

I said, "John, a new strike starts about once a month. They have to have a new strike in Seattle once a month. Suppose it is a waterfront strike, which is always a messy thing." I said, "Why don't you do this in your news handling of it: put two columns side by side and send one man down to write the story of the day from the point of view of the strikers and alongside of it another fellow writing the story from the point of view of the shipowners, and put them side by side?"

There is some merit in that suggestion.

Q Did John do it?

THE PRESIDENT: He has not had a strike since he got there.

Q I come from Scranton, Pennsylvania. We have the only News Writers' Union in America. It is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. It is a part of the International Typographical Union. We have had it for twenty years. It is not a question of the Guild and it is not a question of being absolutely independent of unionism. It is a part of the American Federation of Labor and a part of the International Typographical Union. We have had no complaint about the reporting of the news. We have a very strong union city. I think the news is objectively reported. I do not always agree with a union's side of it. The paper oftentimes is against as well as in favor of the union presentation. Our reporters -- even though when I went there I was against the idea of reporters being members of the unions, I must say in all frankness, in all candidness, the news has been objectively and

honestly presented. No matter what I may feel about it and even though I might want the situation otherwise, the fact is that this news writers' union has objectively presented the news.

Q Now that this minor matter of unionization has been disposed of, perhaps, what is your opinion as to the speed and the time with which we may follow the British experience with regard to a responsibility on unions and union leadership like that which, I think very wholesomely, lies upon the leaders and leadership of industry?

THE PRESIDENT: I should say, offhand, that the pioneers in any movement move more slowly than anyone that comes afterwards. It took a much longer time, in my judgment, to get responsibility in labor as a whole in England than it will take us. In other words, I think we are moving fairly rapidly towards responsibility. We have it today in the leaders of unions such as the Railroad Brotherhood, in a good many of the craft unions, such as the Typographical, for instance, which is a pretty responsible union. A great many unions today publish the list of their assets and their receipts and payments. It is a matter of public knowledge. And more and more of them are coming to that. I should think we are moving pretty fast toward that idea.

Q I should have been more specific. I meant a legal responsibility, a responsibility which would make unions responsible under the law to the Government, under the supervision of the Government, as the Wagner --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): It is the same thing. If you have followed the British law, there are certain responsibilities which we will copy more or less in the next few years. It is not complete legal responsibility but at least it is partial.

Q Before we leave that question I would like to ask you and Mr. Bellamy, since he refers to the possibility of a class conscious reporter, isn't it true -- and I am not saying one way or the other myself -- isn't it true that the reporter has always been class conscious? Hasn't he always reported labor troubles from the standpoint of the employer? Isn't that the fact in the average size city, up to at least 250,000, that even the news of a strike has been frequently overlooked because the public would like to have it that way?

Q (Mr. Bellamy) Are you asking me that question?

Q Yes.

Q (Mr. Bellamy) Mr. President, I say the answer is yes. It has been disgracefully discolored on the side of the employer many, many times but that does not affect me very much as far as my objective is concerned. I think truth, absolute truth, is the thing we should demand from our reporters.

Since again I am presuming on the President's time, I want to avail myself of the floor to switch the subject, immediately, to another. It is the question of people on relief in Cleveland, Ohio. Now, it is not a matter of race and color. Our problem there is very largely the niggers. There are some of those buck niggers sitting on their fannies that will never go to work unless we force them to. The State

Administration there, a democratic State Administration -- that is easily accounted for because, after all, if anybody carried the country, and I voted for you, with as much a majority as you did, there were a lot of others that went across -- (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Paul (Mr. Bellamy) you are getting into politics.

Q (Mr. Bellamy) -- and our Governor was one. But, nevertheless, we are all right. I have five dollars and a clean shirt and that is not much at that because, if the taxes go on much further -- (Laughter)

What do we do to get those people in the frame of mind to go to work again? Because, really, I am terribly worried about it. Last night, coming down on the train, I had a long talk with a chap named Crawford (?), head of the Thompson Products Company, which makes valves for automobiles and airplanes, and I regret to say -- I should not regret to say, in fact I am proud to say -- he is a Harvard man too. He quoted to me from memory some of the recent translations from the Greek, how they built the Acropolis and then after it everybody was on the dole and there was hell to pay and then ultimately the barbarians came. Now, what do you do about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I will come back and answer him in just one question: What have you done with the local relief authorities to take that buck nigger?

Q We have done our utmost. We filled our paper full of investigations and surveys and showed that twenty-five per cent of them don't have any business there.

THE PRESIDENT: What are they on the dole, on state relief or public works?

Q State relief.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, that is the thing. Now you are getting into politics.

Q (Mr. Bellamy) It comes back to the whole theory.

Q There again, and being a Yale man I don't know what the devil you fellows are talking about.

Q (Mr. Bellamy) You never will.

Q I would like to ask on that point, thinking it over as I sat here, I asked, "What is the measure of the influence of a newspaper or an individual everywhere and anywhere where the subject matter broadly is one that concerns what all the people would like to do?" If you take a big group of kids and placate them by saying, "Let us all go to the movies and let us all have a bag of candy," they will all say, "Great; hurrah." The real test is when you tell them something that don't set so good. It might be, "Let us all take a dose of castor oil." The newspaper that can put that thing in or the individual that can put that thing in is exercising real influence, in my opinion.

THE PRESIDENT: If! I am saying, "If" on that because I want to point out a certain inconsistency. I made a checkup last spring on maybe half a dozen papers, all of which were saying editorially every third day, "For God's sake balance the Budget." Well, they were just harping twice a week or three times a week, "For God's sake balance the Budget." Well, they would be a little more specific than that. They would say,

"Look at all these Federal handouts; they are doing this, that and the other thing."

Those same papers, in their own cities, were the first people to come out with editorials saying, "We need a new stadium, by God, and why doesn't Washington give us a new stadium?"

Q That is so.

THE PRESIDENT: Now, that is really the fact. Oh, heavens, this is not universal or general or anything else. If you check it you will find as a matter of policy the majority of papers that have been talking about Federal spending, the crime of Federal spending and the desirability of the Federal Government pulling in its horns and balancing the Budget and cutting down all the emergency expenditures, when it comes to some local question, they are the first people to come out and demand Federal spending in their own city.

Q That is true.

THE PRESIDENT: That really is true. That is one reason.

Q That is true, but you see, Mr. President, it comes down to this, that ultimately all the main tasks are laid in your lap because you are the President, and we get caught up in the effluvia of the time. We say, "There is a lot of loose Federal money and we should have a new sewage disposal plant in Cleveland," and if Mr. Roosevelt had stood up and said, "No, it will mean the unbalancing of the Budget," in that loud stenorian tone, then we would not have done that.

THE PRESIDENT: What I just talked about, it really has an effect

on the average man on the street, the taxi driver, et cetera. They are awfully quick to catch on to the paper that says, "stop spending" one day and "give us this" the next day.

Q I am from Providence, Mr. President. The Government has a responsibility there, Mr. President. We conducted a campaign against expenditures, to the effect that we never heard one word about our economy.

THE PRESIDENT: What did you ask for, for Providence?

Q We did not ask for anything.

THE PRESIDENT: You are marvelous; you deserve a decoration.

Now, right along on that question of the news end tied in with the editorial end -- this is a thing that does not apply to the papers, the great bulk, I would say ninety per cent of the papers in America -- but you and I know the large number of exceptions who, in their Washington stories or their Albany stories, where they have special men, you and I know that in instance after instance the man in the bureau gets word from the home office that they want a story along such and such lines.

Q Amen.

THE PRESIDENT: We don't have to kid ourselves about that because I know too much about it in this city.

Q It works the other way.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not care whether it is pro-Administration or anti-Administration.

Q It also works the other way: Very frequently you will find the home offices counseling their bureaus to keep in the middle of the road.

THE PRESIDENT: That is true if they start off on a personal tangent.

But again, I know an awful lot of readers and they object to what I frankly think -- and I think I said this last year when we were all gathered here -- has been the tendency over the last ten years -- it is not anything recent, it is not the last four years, it existed before that -- to issue an order from the home office, or perhaps not order it but to convey it so that the fellow in the state capital or the National Capital thinks that it is good ball to give a certain color to his special story.

Q That is right.

THE PRESIDENT: And I think the man on the street does know. In those cases what I am talking about applies to only ten per cent of the newspapers in the United States.

Q Mr. President, I represent the Philadelphia Ledger. Mr. President, it seems to me that there is less and less of coloration as time goes on. Now, there are a certain number of very bad examples on both sides but it seems to me there is less partisanship in a purely political story or in a policy story now than there has been at any time since I have been in the business.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is true of ninety per cent of the papers.

Q We are getting away from that very steadily. That, I think, was just the embryonic stage and we are trying to get away from it.

Q Considering the circulation and advertising objective of newspapers, it is inevitably true that newspapers should, during all conservative periods, look ahead of the Government and, during all periods of innovation, be a shirttail behind the Government. I think it is a good thing. You have the press

organized on that basis. The press lives on advertising and yet must seek circulation. It has to reconcile those conflicting interests, always.

THE PRESIDENT: When you pick up the question of advertising, it is true that we do have to think about retaining the advertisers.

Q And the circulation.

THE PRESIDENT: But there again -- well, I will cite an example: A good many years ago the State of New York, long before I was Governor, we were trying to get through, some of us, a bill for the sanitary regulation of department stores. And we assumed that we would have, because they had been very much in favor of the sanitary inspection of factories, we assumed we would get the strong editorial support of one of the New York papers. Very much to our amazement, they came out against the proposed legislation. So I went to see the business manager. I said, "What has happened to you all of a sudden?" He said, "Don't tell anybody; can't you guess?" I said, "I am afraid I can; it is the advertising." He said, "Of course it is the advertising." Of course that is bound to happen. Again it is human nature.

Q It does not influence us any more than the necessity of getting circulation. We must get the confidence and the numbers of a wide reading public. We must reconcile the two.

We are not an initiating force anyhow. The press of the United States would never lead a basic national reform. We would be always critical of one who does but, on the other hand, we would be critical of one who retards the reform forces.

I think there is something in that thing.

Q Wouldn't you just as soon tell us something about the Supreme Court issue? I know that is an interesting subject.

THE PRESIDENT: I will talk the way I talked to the Press Conference.

Q Better than that, more frankly.

THE PRESIDENT: I was perfectly frank with them. For example, if you go back on the Supreme Court thing, there have been an awful lot of people in a great many papers who, ever since my Message of February fifth, have stated, baldly and bluntly, that one reason for adding judges to the Supreme Court, with this over seventy, like it is in the lower courts, was that I had said that their calendar was crowded and they were behind in their work. Now, people who appear before the Senate Committee quote me that way. Of course I never said anything like that in my life. I never suggested it for a moment. They are absolutely up with their calendar. I will tell you a story that illustrates it: When I was a practising lawyer in New York in 1907, I used to have occasional police court clients, people who had been disorderly at two o'clock in the morning in Times Square, and they generally would be taken by the police to the old Jefferson Market Court. There was an old fellow down there, an old Tammany magistrate, who was a law to himself -- there was no supervision over magistrates in those days -- and he had a rule that, by God, he was going to close his court at one P. M. every day.

Well, if I had a Harvard friend to defend on a Tuesday morning, that was all right. There would be only twenty cases before the old judge and he had from ten to one to dispose of

his twenty cases. My client would get heard; he would get heard and he would get a fair deal from the court. But, if my client happened to have been picked up on a Saturday night or a Sunday night and had to appear in Monday morning court before the same old judge, there would be 220 cases. But he had his rule about one P. M. and he would run those 220 cases through his court without hearing the defendant. It was ten dollars or ten days. And they were all tried. His calendar was not crowded on Mondays any more than it was on Tuesdays. He was always up with his work.

But what I did say and what is perfectly true -- ask any lawyer who has had any Supreme Court practice whether they are satisfied with the fact that only twelve per cent of the applications and petitions for certiorari are granted and eighty-eight per cent are turned down. That is all that I said, but it was plenty. Now, that is the background on the thing, so as to get started on the right foot.

Q Now, here we are. I spent thirty years or more trying to build up a business. I worked like the devil ten, eighteen, twenty hours a day and put my heart and soul into it. And now, here come these boys and say, "Just because you have done pretty well, doing that, is no sign we have to. We will get a law for ourselves called the Wagner Act, which will give everything to labor and will tie your hands by your side," so that they can come up and sock me in the face. It seems to me that maybe that Wagner law, which does not allow the employer to call for an election to determine which group in his plant wants to have

a vote as to who should represent the employees in collective bargaining, is wrong. We wonder what your view is on that, whether it is quite fair. It seems to me that the deck was just a little stacked on the side of labor.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not got the law before me so I cannot answer it intelligently.

Q The union may ask for a vote but the employer may not.

THE PRESIDENT: As I remember it, the National Labor Relations Board has discretion on the application of anybody.

Q I think it was in the law.

THE PRESIDENT: I think so. I think any employee and I think any employer, and in practice -- there is the thing. We have never had any actual practice on it. I am inclined to think the law should be liberally interpreted so that if there is any particular demand for a determination of what the majority desires, that determination should be had. It does not have to be an election, as you know.

Q That is fair.

Q I think one of the things that interests the gentlemen here very much is the problem of economy, which you mentioned and which I believe, and I imagine they believe, is very much in your mind as administrator. I think if you could say a word to these men here, who have some influence, even though they may not have much, on what you have in mind in the program there, we would be, all of us, interested in it. I know I would. And, if we could be helpful -- I think on that program there is not a man here who would not want to be constructively

helpful in a job which seems to be a difficult job, even for you.

THE PRESIDENT: Right on that, as you know, I have had quite a number of editors and owners who have pleaded for an immediate balancing of the budget. I have had them down to the White House from time to time. I have said to them, "Look, there is the old budget. It is perfectly simple here in this summary table. How would you balance it?" Nine out of ten would say, "Hell, that is not my business." I never send for Eugene Meyer because he knows too damned much about it.

Q That is right.

THE PRESIDENT: He knows Federal financing probably much better than I do. He has had experience with it for many years.

The situation is, at the present time, I think, a comparatively simple one and, without giving the actual figures of next week's Message to the Congress, I can tell you the gist of the situation. We estimated last January -- these, of course, are rough figures, that at the end of this fiscal year we would have cut the actual deficit from around four billion something to about two billion one (hundred million dollars). For the next fiscal year we estimated that -- not counting debt retirement, which I call technical bookkeeping and not layman's bookkeeping -- on actual income and outgo we would have a balanced budget if we could keep the relief expenditures for the coming year to a billion and a half.

Now, since the January estimate, we have had the practical experience of the March fifteenth income tax collections and, for

certain causes which we are not able to analyze at the present time, they show a falling off, on the basis of the March fifteenth receipts on income taxes, \$250,000,000. less than we expected. Therefore that \$250,000,000. would have to be added to the \$2,100,000,000. estimated for this current year. In addition to that, there are certain taxes which are held up in the court -- the so-called recovery of taxes, the windfall taxes, those have been tied up in the court -- and I think we have only about \$10,000,000. instead of the \$90,000,000. we expected. The railroad retirement taxes have also been held up by the court and instead of getting in \$110,000,000., the time has been extended from time to time by Act of Congress and nothing has come in. The result is that there will be, in this fiscal year, there will be an increase in the deficit of, I would say, roughly, five to six hundred million dollars. However, that will be offset to a certain extent by savings in the actual expenditures of the Treasury which we have already made and which we are going to make during the balance of this year. As you know, the average Government department is not run in even twelfths. Roughly -- I am talking about the average now -- during the first ten months of the year the average department is run on about one-fifteenth of the annual appropriation, therefore in May and June there is left over a good deal more than two-twelfths for those two months. What we are trying to do is to save the bulk of those withheld expenditures and keep them from being spent or obligated during the balance of the year. That money would revert to the

Treasury. Therefore that saving may run to two hundred or two hundred and fifty million dollars in actual outgo. So actually the net deficit -- don't anybody use these figures -- will run \$250,000,000., from \$2,100,000,000. to \$2,350,000,000.

For the next fiscal year, on the basis of tax receipts in March, which are not necessarily reliable because we may make a pickup for various reasons in the coming three fiscal periods, June and September and November, whatever it is -- but based on the March receipts for the coming fiscal year, the Government will probably be, instead of even, with a balanced budget, somewhere around \$450,000,000. in the hole. That can probably be saved by failure to spend appropriations and, therefore, the outlook for the coming fiscal year, with a qualification that I will mention later, is for a substantially balanced budget.

Well, whereas two years ago we were running a deficit of \$4,000,000,000., next year we will come down to a substantially balanced budget, maybe \$100,000,000. out or maybe in the black. But it will be pretty well substantially balanced. That, I think, is a pretty good record.

And the one qualification we have to make is that the Congress will not run wild and start all kinds of new expenditures. One bill that seems to have a very strong support calls for expenditures of \$100,000,000. the first year and about \$300,000,000 a year from that time on. If, at this time, we undertake to get a good many Federal handouts for states, we are lost and the Administration is opposed to starting these new things.

On the totals of receipts and expenditures over a period of years, four years, it seems to be perfectly clear that necessary things, things we regard as necessary, will cost about in the neighborhood of \$7,000,000,000. a year to run the Government and the tax receipts next year ought to be very substantially about \$7,000,000,000. So that, for the fiscal year 1939, we ought to be definitely in the black and start paying down on the debt. Does that cover it, Gene?

Q (Mr. Eugene Meyer) It is very hopeful, Mr. President.

Q While we are trying to balance the budget, I find it is still necessary to give considerable attention, perhaps, to unemployment. I hear this question in a good many parts of the country: One year and two years ago we heard that the engineering was not ready for public works, and now it would seem that there must be a considerable accumulation of engineering for public works. As we go along would it be or would it not be in the part of wisdom to switch over and put part of the money in what might be called useful and lasting public works rather than in other things which would not be so lasting. In other words, the engineering being ready, shouldn't we use more of that kind?

THE PRESIDENT: Your question is based on an assumption that an engineered public works is more useful than one that does not take much engineering; in other words, that a bridge over a river is more useful than terracing a thousand acres of land. Well, that is a question. You have something that is much more visible but I doubt very much, in the long run, whether a bridge over the river, costing the same amount, is more useful to the

country than terracing a thousand acres of land to keep the country from eroding.

Q If it was possible to prepare this engineering and if there was an accumulation, should not we try to use it as much as you can?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because then you come up against the problem of unemployment rolls. At the present time and, incidentally, during the past year we have reduced the people on work relief from 3,400,000 to 2,200,000. In other words, we have taken 1,200,000 people off the work relief rolls. Who are the 2,200,000 people left? During the past year especially, almost all of the skilled and semi-skilled workers have been taken from the relief rolls. Almost all the people on the relief rolls over eighteen and under forty have been given private employment. The result is that today the 2,200,000 people left consist, somewhere around between 80 and 85% of unskilled laborers. Furthermore, a very much larger percentage than last year consists of people over forty years of age. Many of them are over fifty, fifty-five and sixty. They have not yet come to the 65-year age in which they get the old age pensions. So that what might be called, from the point of view of useful work, the cream of the unemployment rolls has been skimmed off and we are left with people who are not fitted to build bridges and permanent buildings, like city halls and large schoolhouses and things like that. They are not fitted to do that kind of work. Therefore, we are confronted with the alternative either of putting them on the dole -- we have our thoughts very firmly set against that -- or of giving them work

they can do. In the case of people in the country, in small towns where they can get out into the country, it is a pretty simple thing to find useful work for them. If we put them, for instance, on the side of a hill and terrace it, or put a lot of little bands on farms in the more eroded regions, it is not very showy but, in the long run, over the country, it probably does as much permanent good as if they were building schoolhouses and bridges.

In the cities it is a much more difficult problem to find useful work for them. A great many of the parks have been cleaned up and what we are looking around for right along is something that the unskilled people and older people can be put to work on. We have not solved that end of it, from the point of view of the city workers.

Q May I say a word there in relation to something Mr. Bellamy said?

I think some of the editorial comment in newspapers, from time to time, results from the local demand on the part of P. W. A. officials and others to try to get something done, to find work. Perhaps there is a mistaken understanding on the part of local newspapers and other interpreters but the idea is that when they are boosting something of this sort, they do not go into all of the situation as you have outlined it here because that is not generally understood. The thought is that when they are constructing or advocating the construction of a bridge or reservoir, you are getting back something on that, but they do not carry it to the point that you have just carried it to, which I think is important.

THE PRESIDENT: Then there is another thing. You get letters to the editors that say it is terrible to have all these people on W. P. A. that won't take private jobs. We have a whole small room of people at work answering those letters and checking up on them and about -- well, out of a hundred complaints that we get in about 80% of them fail to specify any case, any names when you ask them who it is that has refused to work on a private job. He generally comes back and says, "Well, somebody told me so."

The other 20%, where they do give us specific cases, it turns out that the man or woman on W. P. A., especially the woman on W. P. A., has been offered a job at what I call "starvation pay." Now, right in the City of New York there have been hundreds of applications for servants, servant girls especially, by the family that keeps just one girl. They come to W. P. A. headquarters and say, "I want a girl, a general servant. Have you got anybody?" "Sure, we have lots of them. Take your pick. How much do you pay?" "Well, six dollars a week."

We don't ask the girls to leave W. P. A. to take a job as a general household servant at six dollars a week in New York City.

Q Right.

THE PRESIDENT: And the more you check up on it, the more you find that all of these stories about not taking work, when you come down to the actual case itself, does not amount to more than one out of a thousand complaints where there is any chiseling.

We did have, a year ago, a trouble that we corrected in large part, although not entirely, and that was the refusal of W. P. A. workers to leave because if they left and took a good job they were afraid that if it ended at the end of thirty days, they would not get back on W. P. A. That is being pretty well straightened out.

Q There is that concern all the time.

THE PRESIDENT: The reason for it is this: We have, what did I say, 2,200,000 on W. P. A. at the present time. In addition to those, there are about 400,000 people who, today, are getting home relief but ought to get work relief. We haven't enough money to give them all work relief. Therefore, there is, in the larger communities, a waiting list of people waiting to get off home relief and to get on work relief and it has been a very difficult thing to determine the human equation. Here is a fellow on home relief who has been there a whole year and he is at the top of the list for the first W. P. A. vacancy. In comes a man who was on W. P. A. up to a month ago; he went into private employment and then was thrown out of work by the private employer. Should he go back on work relief ahead of the fellow at the top of the list or should he go back on home relief? That is a very hard point to decide. You see, we have these problems on the administrative end. We have not enough money to do it and we want next year to give everybody work relief that ought to have it.

Q If I might turn your attention to the foreign policy -- and, may I say, my policy if I were president, which, thank God, I am not,

because I do not envy you the stars and stripes and all that --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): I will swap with you in 1941. (Laughter)

Q About foreign policy, which would be easier, to make an offensive and defensive alliance with Great Britain and France and guarantee a Pax Romana which would stop that, or what is your idea of the sort of neutrality setup which you think would be wise?

THE PRESIDENT: On your suggestion of that, I will tell you what I will do: I will make that the policy of the United States if you will give me a majority of the Senate of the United States.

Q I will work on it tomorrow. (Laughter)

Q I am neither a Harvard nor a Yale man but one who does not consider his life blighted by that negative fact.

I want to ask a question that I think holds the most ominous possibilities. Politics being what it is and human nature being what it is and the record of Congress on pensions since the Civil War being what it is, is there any limit to the point to which this country will go, let us say in the next decade, with military pensions and with old age pensions, and isn't the Government in for a permanent increase in its expenditures by billions of dollars for that purpose?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you have to separate that into two answers.

First, as regards social insurance of all kinds, if I have anything to say about it, it will always be contributed, and I prefer it to be contributed, both on the part of the employer and the employee, on a sound actuarial basis. It means no money out of the Treasury. It means the employer has got to pay some and the employee some. If the employer pays some of it,

obviously in 9,999 cases out of 10,000 it will be passed on in the cost of the goods sold. In other words, it is not going to break the employers and it is not going to break the employees. On the question, Is it going to break the Government? the answer is, No.

In regard to military pensions, you know as much about that as I do. I tried to prevent the payment of the bonus. It was passed over my veto. When there will be another effort to help the World War veterans on the ground that they are pretty old men, your guess is as good as mine. All we can do to stop that, the better it is.

Q Aren't there millions of people in this country who will demand an outright payment from the Treasury by way of a pension and will never be willing to accept a contribution scheme? As a matter of fact, it would be difficult to establish a scheme for all the people in this country, such as farm laborers and many others.

Q Has Congress ever voted against pensions? Will it ever vote against it in the future?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I will tell you why. You will get an example every day of what is happening to nations that are quickly going broke and before we get to that danger point, we will see certain nations smashing up, as we know definitely, to go back to your foreign question. For the last four years, every responsible statesman in Europe, including the Germans, has said that Germany would last only six months longer, and the question is still, "Is it six months longer or not?" We know their expenditures are so

greatly exceeding their income every year that they are headed for bankruptcy. The same thing is true of Italy and the same thing of France and, since the rearmament program commenced, they are running towards unbalanced budgets and we are coming down to a balanced budget. There are a great many people on both sides who are going to have something to say about busted governments. I think there is a good deal of sense in that.

Q Your man from Michigan rather hesitated to inject himself in the Yale-Harvard forum but he is still a part of the Union.

THE PRESIDENT: You are all right but there is somebody here from Vermont tonight.

Q I hope he has a passport. (Laughter)

Q We have had an epidemic of sit-down strikes and we still have an epidemic of smaller sit-down strikes at present. In your introductory remarks you said something about the inflexible character of editorial opinion. Don't you think it would have been helpful if there had been an expression from you as to the sit-down strike? Would you like to inform us on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. A great many years ago -- and this applies to what I said about dealing with a people who have a mental attitude or experience that is fourteen or fifteen years old -- a great many years ago I took a class of boys of the age of fourteen or fifteen years and the first day in class -- I had never taught a class before -- these boys started raising Cain with me and I stood up behind the desk and I said, "Don't do that!" and to the next fellow, "Stand up in the corner," and to the next fellow who stuck a pin into the gentleman in front of him, I gave two demerits. Well, I did not get order in that classroom and

for two or three days that class raised perfect Cain with me. The headmaster got onto it and he sent for me and he said, "You are pretty young in the game." He said, "When you go back in the class, take a pen or pencil and when they start throwing spitballs or sticking pins into each other, let them see you see them and jot down a name. When class is over, send for them one by one and say, 'Listen, son, you are trying to get into college. I don't give a continental damn whether you get into college or not. I am here to help you get into college, if you want to get into college. I don't mind your throwing spitballs but there are a lot of other boys in the class who want to get into college and your throwing spitballs is keeping them from achieving what is their ambition.' Reason with them and teach them, one by one, why they are hurting themselves and not you by raising Cain in the class."

Well, I tried it out and after a week of it I had the most orderly class in school because it was order based on a knowledge of the consequences, a knowledge of what it would do to them and a knowledge of what it would do to their fellow students. I never had any trouble after that.

Is the allegory sound? Incidentally, they are beginning to realize in an organization like the Automobile Workers, who have an experienced mentality of a fourteen or fifteen year-old, they are beginning to realize two things: first, that what they are doing is illegal -- no question about that. They say to themselves, "It is a misdemeanor," and they have been told by their representatives that that is not nearly as serious an offense

as what some of the lawyers have been doing ever since the Wagner Labor Relations Act went through. They have been receiving from the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the National Manufacturers' Association and Liberty League lawyers' pamphlets saying, "This Act is unconstitutional. Disregard it." Disregard a Federal statute! The boys have been told that out in Michigan, they have been told it is not nearly as serious to trespass on somebody's property -- that is a misdemeanor -- as it is to violate a Federal statute.

You see what they have been taught; they have been taught the wrong thing. However, they are beginning to realize that a misdemeanor is a wrong thing and they are beginning to realize that sit-down strikes are damned unpopular and finally they will realize that labor cannot get very far if it makes itself unpopular with the bulk of the population of the country.

It will take some time, perhaps two years, but that is a short time in the life of a nation and the education of a nation.

Q Mr. President, you have more or less answered my point. I am from Oakland, which is the birthplace of the sit-down strike. We had our first in 1933. We have subjected ourselves to criticism because we demonstrated no leadership in contesting the sit-down strike situation.

As a matter of fact, we learned this: We are in a changing world and we are going through a social and economic revolution. These men are employing the weapons they have at their command. We are finding, as time goes on, that when they indulge in excesses they prove to be exceedingly unpopular. In my opinion,

the newspaper editors and the business men want to bring about a solution of this problem over night. We are an impatient people. We don't like to temporize with these problems. We want to use a new law rather quickly. I don't think we want that done.

We have been the testing ground for C. I. O. in this country. We have been through it from start to finish and I think that out of it, when it is all done, that all sides will have learned a lesson.

THE PRESIDENT: Both have made mistakes but out of it we are going to find some basis for compromise when both sides find that excesses don't pay and policies engaged in by both sides don't pay. Out of that we are going to get a workable system but we won't get it by antagonism and threats and demands. It must be learned only by experience and we have to go through that experience before we find a satisfactory solution. I think I have been as close to it as any man in this country.

Q In your estimate for a virtually balanced budget, will any part of it be represented by income of social security tax collections over social security costs?

THE PRESIDENT: Frankly, I do not know; I think, yes. As I remember it -- Gene (Mr. Meyer), do you remember the answer to that? My memory is that the estimated receipts are somewhere around \$600,000,000. and the payments about \$500,000,000.

Q (Mr. Meyer) I am not familiar with the estimates for next year.

THE PRESIDENT: It is something like that and then, of course, if the reserves build up in the course of the next few years, it will be perfectly all right to change the law. The law is still at

the present time -- it calls for an unwieldy and unnecessary reserve such as any insurance company would maintain.

Q May I ask a question? Most of us here employ these people who are our Washington correspondents. By and large, do you think we send the right people here? Do we have a good bunch?

THE PRESIDENT: A perfectly grand bunch, absolutely without question.

I think there is one thing that goes out of Washington that is probably a mistake from the ultimate point of policy and that is the gossip news column. That service is just pure gossip because the percentage of error in those gossip columns -- I am not talking about the serious columns, like dear old Mark Sullivan, et cetera, people like Paul Mallon -- let us be quite frank -- I think the percentage of absolute manufactured error runs as high -- I checked it for a month -- runs as high as forty per cent. That is pretty damned high.

Q Even the field artillery is less than that.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think that is going to help in the long run.

But of course all the other men, they are absolutely grand. I kid them and they kid me. We get along absolutely beautifully.

Q Have the figures revealed by the first quarter in the tax returns developed anything that would enable us to say anything as to the possibility of a change in the undivided profit tax situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Generally, the opinion on the Hill, in the Treasury and in the White House is no change this year because the Congress has a very enormous mass of material and they will be damned lucky if they get through by August. If we started any amendments to existing tax laws, I do not know when Congress will go home and I think Congress feels the same way.

Q Would that cover capital gains also?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, I heard a little while ago that you might be tempted to say a little more about the court matter?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course you know the particular method was arrived at by a process of elimination. I felt, after a very careful review of the whole thing over a period of two months or more, that we really did need those additional judges on the lower courts, on the Circuit Court and in the Supreme Court. In the case of the Supreme Court, there has been a good deal of talk about having more than nine judges. Just take the question of certiorari alone.

It is possible that if we have -- this is not derogatory to age but it is a practical fact which we all know in talking about the age of people -- if we have a Supreme Court that averages sixty years of age instead of over seventy, they would be capable of a greater and more sustained effort in turning out work than the present members of the Supreme Court. That is perfectly obvious. Now, whether nine of them of, let us say, the average age of sixty, could adequately cover all the cases that come before them is a question of doubt.

There has been a great deal of feeling that if what might be called modern business methods were put into the Supreme Court -- and a number of judges in the past have been prone to approve of this suggestion -- if you had, let us say, five of them at all times working on certiorari and the other ten sitting on the bench and hearing cases -- I am not talking about

the major cases involving constitutionality, where you would probably want all fifteen to sit but the run-of-mine of cases -- a decision by, say ten judges who were doing the sitting for the moment would be entirely satisfactory from the point of view of a proper interpretation of the law. You would have five of them, at the same time, working on certiorari. That is one of the suggested changes in the mechanics of the court.

This particular measure does not, by any change or necessity, call for fifteen members of the Supreme Court. You cannot tell how many would retire but there is nothing fundamentally terrible in having fifteen, if it should go to fifteen. It might be possible, through revamping the business methods of the court, to get a better determination of all of these certiorari cases, where there is a great deal of complaint on the part of lawyers that they are simply turned down and not heard, and without any opinion.

Q Hasn't it always been your experience as a lawyer that the lawyers complain that there is a lack of business that gives them compensation?

THE PRESIDENT: I think there will always be the same number of cases that go to the Supreme Court.

There is one more question we had down here, because we have covered most of these on which I would like to get your slant, that is a subject that, of course, is to a certain extent before the Congress and before the people and before everybody else. That is the ownership of news broadcasting by newspapers. That is a subject, frankly, that is going to come up and I would like very much to have your slant on it.

A very large percentage of the applications for change of ownership of radio stations at the present time before the Communications Commission are for the purchase of otherwise owned stations by newspapers. There is a good deal of feeling that there should not be dual ownership and there are a great many reasons advanced for it. One of the principal reasons that you hear on the Hill because, of course, the Congress, the House of Representatives especially, the majority of the membership represent Congressional districts that do not have any very large metropolitan papers in them. They represent districts that are either almost wholly rural districts, with quite small papers, or districts that have one city of a hundred or two hundred thousand people, where the newspaper is not a very rich paper and therefore cannot afford to raise the capital to buy a radio station. The feeling of these people on the Hill, and I take it they get support from their local newspaper ownership, is that the ownership of radio news broadcasting by newspapers will, almost inevitably, tend to put the ownership in the hands of a comparatively small number of papers.

What is your slant on that?

- Q Let me speak as a man from one of those very small rural districts, who is not considering purchasing a radio station. One reason for that is that I doubt very much if our district could support a radio station, as costs are now, as I understand it. I started to look into it because it seemed to be something that might at once be competition to a newspaper and also that might work with a newspaper. Let me make a comparison between two newspapers in

one town. Sometimes the town is big enough to support two newspapers if there is a capital investment in only one plant, where it could not support two papers decently put out from two plants.

To a certain extent -- to a lesser degree because the plants are different -- it would seem that a newspaper and a radio station could be complementary and so I started looking into it from that angle. I found that I did not believe we could afford one. But it seemed to me from that little investigation that there might be fewer radio stations and newspapers by a great many because of the matter of the limited number of wave lengths. Because of that limited number of wave lengths your radio stations, naturally located in larger market areas where they can reach a big enough population so they can sell advertising, will make money and live.

It does not seem to me a question of whether small newspapers are opposed to big newspapers owning radio stations. I do not think most of them care. It does not matter one way or the other.

I do not see why a majority of the members of Congress from rural areas should care whether the radio stations in other districts are owned by newspapers or are not owned by newspapers. The broadcasts come into their districts just as the circularization of the big city newspapers come into rural areas where the small papers also get their circularization. In that way there does not seem to me to be any siding of small newspapers against big newspapers.

I think probably one reason why the newspapers apply for ownership is perhaps that they are more capable of satisfactorily conducting radio stations.

THE PRESIDENT: How about the combination of advertising rates?

Q I do not know much about that but my impression is that the trend is away from combinations -- that it does not work out as satisfactorily. As far as the handling of news and other matters over the radio stations is concerned, where men from the newspaper organizations control them they benefit by these ideas of truth in news which, of course, has developed since the days of the journalist whose idea of the truth was what he thought and anybody who differed was a damned liar. They will also benefit because of the fact that they are accustomed to handle the advertising on a businesslike basis. Newspapers have found that is necessary, that there are various cut-rate practises, such as indulged in by some merchants on side streets, that do not pay as well as the one-price methods of your department stores on the main streets. I think that is one reason why you find that combination of newspapers and radios in your larger areas and I don't see why the small papers and the Representatives on the Hill from the rural areas should oppose it on the grounds on which you seem to have heard reports.

Q I own a radio station and we do not combine our advertising on the newspaper with the radio. It does not work. I do not see any reason why owning a newspaper should disqualify me from owning a radio station unless there be some theory that political bias in my newspaper columns might result in bias with respect to my broadcasts. But, under the rules and regulations of the radio commission, you cannot put your bias on the air. You give all sides the same opportunity.

I think newspapers are equipped in a business way to handle radio stations better than anybody else and I think the Radio Commission would support that generally. Why a newspaper man should be disqualified from owning a radio station, I do not see.

Q A radio station owned by a newspaper is much more likely to be influenced in what it puts on the air than a purely commercial station because the ownership of that station is interested in the newspaper and, assuming the newspaper is honorable, it protects its newspaper reputation in what goes out over the air.

As the gentleman says, I do not know of any newspaper that owns a radio station that has a combination rate. That would be as bad business for the radio as it would be for the newspaper. It would encourage the advertising to get out of the newspaper and into the air. The newspaper-owned station is much more likely to stick to reporting facts accurately. Every distortion of news broadcast that I know of has been broadcast by a strictly commercial station, whose men have had no newspaper background, no regard for truth but only a desire to create a sensation.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that has been found true.

Q I represent a newspaper in a city of a hundred thousand. It seems to me that the question of responsibility, which has been rather indefinitely referred to, is the major part of the whole plan.

Now you gave us the honor of coming up in the Wilkes-Barre sector to look at the effects of a flood approximately a year ago. We have two rather small radio stations in our community, neither owned by newspapers. Those papers did not have adequate staffs to handle an emergency. We newspapers did the best we

could. Light, power and everything else went. There was water on your floor and in your cellar. We had all those things to fight. We did the best we could to get out reliable news. People were accustomed to looking into the newspapers for literally that.

Now came the emergency of the two floods which lasted over a period of ten days. These inadequately manned stations of ours put out all kinds of rumors, nothing based on fact at all. We could not reach the people with news.

THE PRESIDENT: We had the same experience in the Ohio flood. Scare stories went out of the irresponsible, privately-owned radio stations.

Q I think it would be for the best interest of the Government to have these stations, particularly in the smaller cities, to have these stations in the hands of financially reliable people and those who have been experienced in the getting out of reliable news rather than in the hands of irresponsible individuals.

We own a station. I went out and bought one since -- I bought it before these damned laws came, I do not know whether I will lose the money I put in -- but I went out with the idea of getting a responsible station and doing whatever we could if an emergency came up and having supplemental advertising. We are aiding in our community with honest news and rendering a real public service.

Q The McClatchy papers own five stations. Two are in cities, Fresno and Sacramento. Sacramento is a city of over a hundred thousand and Fresno is a city of around seventy thousand. One station is

in Reno, one at Bakersfield and one at Stockton.

I just want to emphasize and endorse what this gentleman said over here. Our experience has been that the newspaper-owned radio stations in California not only are the more responsible stations but the public confidence is greater in them than it is with the commercial stations. Newspapers are popular because they render a very definite public service. Radios also render a public service. Newspapers have been in the business of rendering public service for years and years and years. Therefore I cannot see why a newspaper is not better equipped to render that public service by way of radio. It is a matter of showmanship; it is a matter of dealing with the public and giving the public clarity, et cetera, and I think that newspapermen, being trained in that, are far more qualified to run a radio station that meets the demands of the community than independent or commercial people that have had no such experience, such as the fellow who would say, "Let us start a radio station," and they raise \$50,000. and they do not know a damned thing about it. We have --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): You get a news interpreter that does not know news when he sees it.

Q Talk about floods: We have a commercial station in San Francisco.

We had a little two-day rain and one morning it came out and said,
→ "Sacramento is under water; 150 homes are already flooded."

Well, the river was then ten feet below flood stage. The Chamber of Commerce had to call up the station and said, "You have to make a retraction," and they said, "We are sorry but

we have no time on the air to make a retraction."

You talk about rural communities: We found that our radio stations have made for good will, not only for the newspapers but also have helped community enterprises in the cities themselves, with the result that the papers in those small communities, rather than opposing our ownership of stations, have come to us seeking advice how they also can acquire stations. Up and down the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys and at other points newspapers have acquired radio stations, not because they were surprised by the results obtained through these stations but merely because they thought it was a good, sound proposition. We found out that the radio station in conjunction with the newspaper helps to gain good will for the newspaper, provided the station is run on a high plane. While our papers have certain policies and they are very liberal, there has never been any attempt to inject a policy of the paper into the station. We supported you, but we had just as many speeches by Landon and even had some by Mr. Browder where a lot of stations would not permit his talk, and we had no complaint from that score, even during the campaign.

So, I think a newspaper can run a radio station just as good as any other.

THE PRESIDENT: You know what came closer to bringing on a European war than anything else in the past three weeks? It was when the Italian brigade, fighting with General Franco, ran away from the Government troops at Guadalajara. The British radio is Government-owned and Government-operated -- I think I am right in saying that -- and that evening the British Government announcer told of

the retreat, the rout of the Italian troops and then went on and said, "We might almost say that this was a second Caporetto," whereupon Brother Mussolini went clear out through the roof.

Q In that connection, on our river floods, we experienced the same thing. Radio stations not owned by newspapers announced the dam had gone out and scared people to death.

Q You spoke of the Ohio Valley. When we had the flood which affected 200,000 people, the radio stations which were run by newspaper people were more efficient and effective in a sense because they had a greater responsibility. For instance, when the power went off, they told us we had to stop our radio. Immediately we got the signal taken over by National (the National Broadcasting Company) and in a little while had 5,000 radio stations broadcasting -- it was broadcast as news from the outside -- and it was broadcast in Louisville and immensely serviceable in getting 200,000 people out before they drowned.

Q It is 10:30.

THE PRESIDENT Well, I could go on for a long time but I suppose I had better go up and sign today's mail.

It is fine to see you and I hope to see you next April. We had a very interesting meeting. I hope you will come to me to say, "How do you do," to chat with me on any problems that come before you and on which I can help. Always feel that the latch-string is out. (Applause)

(The Conference adjourned at 10:30 P. M.)